

Chapter No. 2092
16/HR43/R2309
EW 16V

***HOUSE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 123***

Originated in House

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Andrew H. ...", written over a horizontal line.

Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 123

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE HEROIC AND INSPIRATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF PATRICK HARDISON WHILE IN THE LINE OF DUTY AND DURING THE MOST EXTENSIVE FACE TRANSPLANT SURGERY PERFORMED TO DATE.

WHEREAS, Patrick Hardison, a 41-year-old volunteer firefighter from Senatobia, Mississippi, embodies all of the characteristics of a true hero -- intrepidity, valor, prowess, gallantry, bravery, courage and fortitude -- characteristics that he possessed before the fateful day in 2001 that stole his essence and before he endured the 26-hour surgery on August 14, 2015, to attempt to return a bit of normalcy to his life; and

WHEREAS, as a firefighter, Patrick faced dangerous, deadly situations that demanded he put his life on the line every time the bell rang, and September 5, 2001, was no different as he fearlessly and bravely rushed into a scorching house consumed with flames that reached broiling temperatures to rescue a trapped woman, but only moments after courageously entering, the roof

suddenly collapsed, knocking off his helmet and melting the mask that protected his face; and

WHEREAS, miraculously, the doctors were able to save his life, but not his face, as his eyelids, ears, lips, most of his nose, most of his vision and his hair became victims of the torrid inferno, which also caused disfiguring third-degree burns across his entire head, neck and upper torso, changing not only his outward appearance but his entire life; and

WHEREAS, the 27-year-old father of three returned home to Senatobia after a 63-day stay in a burn center in Memphis, Tennessee, and while he tried to return to the regular hustle and bustle of his pre-accident life, he realized that was an impossible feat, as he could not look in a mirror without grimacing or attend a baseball game or other social gathering without becoming the object of everyone's stares; and

WHEREAS, despite having a face that was "one huge scar," Patrick tried to remain in good spirits, playfully explaining to curious children that he was injured in a fight with a bear, but even his best efforts at acceptance could not prevent the dark times he endured for 14 years, as more than 70 surgeries involving multiple skin grafts from his leg to his face were unable to return any "semblance of normal anatomy" to the otherwise normal man, who hid behind sunglasses and a baseball cap whenever he ventured outdoors; and

WHEREAS, resigned to the fact that his face would forever be the focus of concern, questions and ogles, a church friend would not accept that future for Patrick and contacted Dr. Eduardo Rodriguez, an internationally recognized plastic surgeon who had performed a face transplant surgery in 2012, and after examining Patrick, Dr. Rodriguez realized that the traits that make a perfect candidate for a face transplant, which are courage, commitment and responsibility, exuded from Patrick's core, so he made him his patient and placed him on the face transplant waiting list in August 2014; and

WHEREAS, once Patrick was on the waiting list, Dr. Rodriguez began looking for the ideal candidate, someone who matched Patrick's biological traits to minimize the risk that his body would reject the new tissue as well as similarities in skin, hair color, weight and size, and after the tragic death of free-spirited, 26-year-old, Brooklyn artist and bicycle enthusiast David P. Rodebaugh, the doctor knew the time had come for Patrick to begin a new normal with a new face; and

WHEREAS, Rodebaugh was an organ donor, and his mother, remembering that her son had always wanted to be a firefighter, gave permission for the doctors to use her baby boy's face to complete the groundbreaking surgery, which required Patrick to undergo a multitude of physical and psychological tests before participating in an experimental surgery that only touted a survival rate of 50 percent; and

WHEREAS, on August 14, 2015, a team of nearly 100 medical professionals with Dr. Rodriguez at the helm began the most extensive face transplant surgery ever by removing David's scalp and face, including his eyelids, and attaching them to Patrick's face, connecting the blood vessels, shaping the nose and chin and replacing Patrick's eyelids and the muscles within that control blinking, and as Patrick's new face, particularly his new lips and ears, became robust with color as he laid on the operating table, Dr. Rodriguez knew the surgery would be successful; and

WHEREAS, the world's most extensive face transplant surgery lasted 26 hours and cost between \$850,000 and \$1,000,000, but the unforgettable feeling the firefighter and father of five experienced when not a single person gave him a second glance when he left his hospital room in New York to go shopping at Macy's was absolutely priceless, causing both doctor and patient to be overcome with a flood of emotions upon the realization that the surgery was a huge success, Patrick would become an average Joe again, and Dr. Rodriguez now had the wherewithal and experience to help dozens of other similarly situated individuals enjoy life anew; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to pay tribute to fine, heroic Mississippians such as Patrick Hardison, whose dauntless fortitude and unwavering courage remain steadfast despite life's obstacles, motivating and inspiring the Senatobia community and the people of the great State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and commend the heroic and inspirational achievements of Patrick Hardison while in the line of duty and during the most extensive face transplant surgery to date, and extend our most sincere wishes for continued success in all of his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to Patrick Hardison and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
April 15, 2016.



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
April 19, 2016



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE